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OUR MISSION IN CHINA.

WHATEVER other claim the Chinese may have upon our time and attention, there is no question in the minds of those who have lived and worked among them, that, they are, as a rule, the most misunderstood people upon the earth to-day. This arises from a variety of causes. They are very far away from us. Only a limited number of them ever come to our shores, and those from the extreme Southern provinces, the Central and Northern Chinese rarely, if ever, leaving their own country, since the popular sentiment both of government and people is very strong against emigration. Then again our environment is different from theirs; we are a modern nation, a Western nation, and a Christian nation. It is not meant by the last statement that we dwell in a land where everyone lives up to the high moral code of the New Testament, but simply that the great forces of evil, which are the same all the world over, are here restrained and held in check by our religion. We are a modern nation, and it is very difficult for us to form a correct opinion concerning the state of things in a nation that has practically stepped at once out of the ages of antiquity into the present. We are a Western nation, we are essentially the product of Roman civilization, or more strictly of the Greek civilization which preceded it; their architecture, their literature, their language, their logic, their very thought color everything in this Western world. When we come to China and the Chinese, we go back and antedate all that is Roman or Greek; so that even the very phraseology that we use when speaking of this Eastern people, is oftentimes erroneous. What do we mean, for instance, when we speak of their civilization, government, education or literature? Are we using the terms in the same sense in which we apply them to our own people and country? The fact that we are not may be illustrated by a single example.

Education, as shown by the very derivation of the word, is "a drawing or leading-out," it is a broadening or expanding of the mind's horizon, it is the storing of a youth's mind with information which is practical and useful, and which shall make him better fitted to enjoy life and all its privileges, and to fill his place successfully among his fellow-men. The Chinese idea of education is exactly the reverse of this. It is not a "leading-out," it is a "leading-in," it is a contracting, a narrowing of the mind, a binding of it as with bands of iron, stultifying it and forbidding its growth. It is as if one took the mind of a child and clamped it in a vise, allowing it to develop, if at all, only in one narrow, lateral direction. It is the cultivation of one faculty alone, that of the *memory*, to the utter exclusion and deadening of all the others. It is not, then, education in any true sense of the word as we understand it, though it may be education as understood by the Chinese.

Again it is almost impossible for us to disassociate ourselves from the atmosphere in which we live. The result of this is that our views of modern paganism or heathen religions are modified to a greater or less extent by the Christian atmosphere through which we see them. What we read of in books of travel, what fascinates us in pictures or sketches of Asiatic religions made by skillful but often self-deceived artists, is not heathenism in its terrible reality, an awful system of tyranny and moral slavery, degrading its poor victims even to the earth, but it is, if the expression may be allowed, a *Christianized heathenism*.

In illustration let us consider briefly the subject of heathen worship. It has been said that as the Christian goes to his Church on Sunday to worship his God, so the heathen goes to his temple on his Sunday—if he has a Sunday—to worship his god, and that the difference between the two forms of worship and the attendant ceremonies is not as great as many have supposed. It is not unnatural that such a view should prevail, for our idea of worship of any kind is almost necessarily colored by our view of the worship of Je-

hovah. But how different is the reality! Christian worship means order and system, and above all things peace and quietness. Heathen worship involves none of these. The writer has stood in a heathen temple and seen gambling taking place directly in front of the high-altar, while quarreling and noisy wrangling were heard on every side even during the most solemn part of the ceremony. Or, again, what is our view of the heathen hierarchy? Is not our view instinctively colored by that which we form of the Christian ministry? In our land the clergy occupy very nearly, if not actually, the highest position in the social scale. We expect that they shall be our leaders and our guides; we demand not only intellectual ability and training, but we demand more than this, a pure and exemplary moral life, to which we shall look up. The heathen priest does not necessarily fill any of these conditions. He occupies not only a low position in the social scale, but his life need not correspond in a single particular with any of the moral teachings which he professes. He is not infrequently the laughing-stock of the people as he passes through the streets. The ranks of his order are recruited from the low and ignorant, and oftentimes the very imbecile, and a Chinese father confesses that if he had a son that was absolutely worthless, he would do one of two things, either put him to death, or allow him to become a candidate for a heathen priesthood.

China has been for ages a locked, a sealed country, practically surrounded on all sides by a great wall of exclusion, such as that which literally bounds it upon its Northern frontier. The world has gone on without it, living its own life, writing its own history, and China has remained stranded upon the shores of time. Given these conditions in any land, what should we expect to find? In a land left for more than twenty centuries practically to itself, we should expect to find a development absolutely unique. It is what we do actually find when we examine this vast land and people to-day. We should expect to find a great national religion of some kind, furnishing the people with those objects of worship which

the human heart in all ages has demanded, and a pantheon of gods for all times and seasons. We should expect to find ignorance of the densest sort as to everything concerning the portion of the world which lay outside such a people's own narrow wall of exclusiveness. We should expect to see, as even among the most savage and degraded of mankind, some form of government: however simple, however crude, a government of some kind there must be. There would also be a certain system of education and training though it might be so narrow and crude as hardly to be recognized as worthy of the name. And lastly, we should expect to find a total absence of anything like a spirit of ambition and progress—but to find instead a spirit of pride, self-sufficiency and conceit—similar to that of the petty ruler of one of the South Sea Islands who, when first visited by a British ship, informed its commander that he considered himself the ruler of all the universe. This is practically what we discover in the great Middle Kingdom to-day, where it is still believed by a large mass of the people that all the world pays tribute to Peking, and that the crowned heads of Europe and America sit upon their thrones only by the gracious permission of the son of heaven.

The whole story of China briefly told—its entire policy, is wrapped up in two short sentences: "Whatever is from within the Middle Kingdom, and of the ancient times is necessarily good; our peace, our happiness and welfare depend upon our clinging to these forever." "Whatever is from without our sacred country, or is of the modern time, is necessarily bad and injurious; the peace of our land, the happiness and well-being of the people are dependent upon our having nothing whatever to do with them."

The time has now come, however, when all this must change. The moment has arrived when China must step out upon the theatre of the world's activity, and take her place among the great nations of the earth. The Russians upon the north, the British upon the west, the French and Dutch upon the south, the Japanese and others upon the east, are

knocking clamorously at her doors. The steamer—the “fire-wheel-boat”—now plows the waters of her inland rivers; the clicking of the telegraph is heard in the palaces of her rulers; the iron horse has already forced his way into her borders, and is waiting to bind the scattered portions of the empire together with links of steel. The ancient war-junk is being replaced by the iron-clad, and the spear and flint-lock of the army are being exchanged for the breech-loading rifle. Old China is slowly but surely passing away, and New China is coming in to take its place. In a grander sense than that ever given to it by the scholars of the empire, the saying of the great philosopher is coming true, “Within the four seas all men are brethren.”

We bear three relations to the Chinese, political, commercial and religious. It is upon the religious only that we now have time to dwell. What is the religious condition of the Chinese people? One thing is certain, they are not anxiously “searching for the truth,” or “eagerly looking for the light.” If they ever were they have long ago given it up. Fully five centuries before the angel song at Bethlehem, Confucius, the master, gave them his code of ethics. He originated nothing. “I only hand down to you the precepts of the ancients,” are his words. His system has been the great power that has held the people together through the centuries. About the time of the destruction of Jerusalem the Emperor, looking through an ancient classic read these words: “The people of the west also have sages.” He called his officers and said to them: “Go, journey westward toward the region of the sunset until you find the teachers of the true and great religion, and bring them back with you to the Middle Kingdom.” They returned and brought with them the dreamy, mystic religion of Gautama Buddha, which has spread itself all through the eighteen provinces. There still remained a longing in the human heart for something that neither of these religious systems gratified, and hence came the development of Taoism, which has furnished the people with a pantheon of gods outnumbering that of Greece and

Rome combined. These great systems have been modified, interwoven, and added to, to such an extent that it is almost impossible to unravel them, and find what really lies at the core. A Chinaman's religion is not so much eclectic as comprehensive. He has practically tried everything in the form of a religion that mortal man has had to offer. He has worshiped everything from the heavens above to the earth beneath and the waters under the earth, and he practically confesses that all religion is a failure. He is the most wonderful illustration upon earth to-day of man's utter inability to find peace and satisfaction for his immortal soul in anything outside the Church of God. He is like the wretched invalid who, smitten with a disease which is incurable, having tried physicians and surgeons innumerable, gives up in despair and asks this one sole favor of his friends, that they will not disturb him, but allow him to finish his life in peace. "You need not come to us to talk about religion; we know all about religion; we have listened to moral teachings of every kind for two thousand years; they are all equally good, and all equally poor," is the Chinese greeting to the missionary of to-day. And so, being utterly unable to appreciate the sacrifice of the Cross, and the life-giving power of a religion based on faith, he naturally attributes the perseverance of the missionary in his work, either to political or commercial or even dishonest motives. "These men are spies in the service of the United States Government;" "these men come here to steal our children and make slaves of our people;" "these men come here to injure us, to poison us—let us rise and drive them out," say the anti-Christian placards on the city walls. It is exactly what might be expected under the circumstances.

Two views of the heathen have been presented even in our own life-time. In the first picture all was dark and gloomy. So utterly without hope, without God, without even a soul was the heathen that there was no need of sending him missionaries, for it was impossible to touch him. Now the pendulum has swung through the long arc, as it usually does in

matters of this kind, and to-day we have the other extreme. The picture now presented is most bright and cheerful in its coloring. So pure and good is the heathen, so much has he been elevated by his own religious system, that he not only does not need the missionary's teaching, but he has very much which from his elevated pedestal he can confer upon the Christian. Where lies the truth, and to whom shall we turn to find it? We turn to the Word of God, which describe the heathen as he was in days of old, and we turn to the man of God who preaches that word in heathen lands to-day. The testimony of the two is a unit, and it is this, that the truth lies midway between the above extremes. The heathen is not all-bad, neither is he all-good, he is, in the grand old expression of the Scriptures which has woven itself through and through the liturgy of the Church, a man "lying in darkness and in the shadow of death." It should be remarked that the missionary of the Gospel speaks so distinctly upon this point because of the peculiar advantages he enjoys for studying the problem. He has broken down that triple wall of exclusion—isolation, language, and race prejudice—which separates the Asiatic from his European brother.

Let us take the first of these two designations, "the man in darkness." One of the first duties of the missionary of the Church returning to his own land and standing up before his own people, is to bear testimony to this, viz.: that the heathen in all that is essential, in all that distinguishes him from the disciple of the Master, is unchanged through the ages. The same to-day in his inner nature—however changed the external—that he was in the days of Rome, and of Babylon, and of Assyria before her. Let us not be misunderstood; we make no sweeping accusation which says that there is nothing good in the heathen world. Bright lights shine here and there through the darkness; Seneca, Socrates, and other seekers after light in profane history, and Cornelius in sacred history, but they are the brilliant exceptions that only prove the rule. The heathen, then, is *in darkness*, or, we may say, *in ignorance*, for the

terms are well nigh synonymous in the Asiatic world. He is in ignorance on the line of the three great relations of man as set forth for all time in the Sermon on the Mount. Prayer, alms-giving, and fasting represent man's threefold relation to himself, his brother man, and his God. The heathen is in darkness on these three.

First, as to himself, he does not know who he is or what he is. He does not understand the origin, the structure, or the organic laws of the mortal body which encloses his soul. It follows as a necessary consequence that he knows nothing of the sanctity of human life, and places little value upon it. So we find him bartering away his life for a few pieces of silver, so we find him regarding suicide as a virtue. So he rows quietly by in his little skiff while his brother man drowns in the river by his side—not a hand or an oar put out to save him. We call it “brutality,” we say he is lacking in “common humanity.” Not at all; what we mean by that statement is, when we come to analyze it, that he is lacking in *common Christianity*. He is as human as we are, but what he lacks is that refined sense of the value and sacredness of human life which leads us to stretch forth the hand and save our brother, not only from impending death or serious injury, but from the slightest danger or harm that can befall him. And as he knows little of the body, so he knows still less of the soul and its immortal destiny. Glimpses of a life beyond the grave indeed he has. He may live again in the bird, or the beast, or the fish, but that his mortal body is to rise immortal and, joined to the spirit, is to live on forever a perfected being in the paradise of God, is a truth just as new and startling to him to-day as it was eighteen hundred years ago when St. Paul first heralded it on the streets of Athens. He must be put right, then, upon this first great line, and the Church of God alone can do it.

Secondly, he is in darkness as to his brother man, both within the bounds of the sacred kingdom and without them. With millions of his countrymen he does not realize that he has brother *men* outside the wall of China. Foreign devils,

demons, curious grotesque creatures they may be, who float to him across the ocean—for “ocean-men” is the Chinese term for foreigners—but none of these are worthy for a moment of being reckoned upon a level with the loyal son of Confucius. It is the work of the Church to enlighten him upon this subject, to teach him of his fellow-men in other lands, and his relation to them as well as to those who live within the borders of the eighteen provinces.

Thirdly, he is in darkness as to things divine. Worship indeed he has of anything and everything, from the deified emperor upon his throne to the tiniest idol that dwells in the household shrines. Of the one true Almighty Creator of the universe, his Maker, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, he knows nothing. This knowledge it is the duty as it is the privilege of the Church of God to give him.

The Church, then, by putting man right on the lines of these three great relations, *saves* him. Her salvation is not fragmentary or partial, it is comprehensive and complete. She does not look upon the foreign missionary as a man who, moved simply by a feeling of pity and charity, stands upon the brink of a precipice and draws back his perishing brother man from the awful doom to which a caricature of a God of love has consigned him. That is the lowest and most degrading view of foreign missions that has ever been held by those who name the name of Christ. The Church's system of salvation is as far higher than this as the heavens are higher than the earth. Salvation in her system is *restoration* of body, mind, and soul; the giving back to fallen man of that blessed image of his Maker which was his in Eden. In a successful mission, as in any other line of Church work, there must be order, system, and discipline. She cannot allow her missionaries to wander here and there, each with his own individual idea of what her work is, and each preaching his own psalm and gospel, but she moves ever “as an army with banners.”

Let a concrete illustration drawn from the centre of a great Chinese city illustrate the method by which she carries

light and life to "them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death." In the midst of such a great city stands a group of mission buildings. They are five in number. One larger and more prominent than the others occupies the centre; that is the church. Of the buildings that surround it, the first is the medical station or mission dispensary, where the sick are healed and the poor have the gospel preached to them. This work is not carried on simply because the Chinese are densely ignorant of medicine and surgery and live in almost constant violation of all known sanitary laws. That is one of the reasons, but it is only one. Nor is it solely because it is our duty ever upon this earth to minister to our suffering fellow-man in the name of Him who came to minister to us. All this is involved, and something more. This work is carried on that the heathen may be taught and shown practically the value in the sight of God of the mortal body which he wears, that it is not the work of chance or of demons, but mysteriously and wonderfully made by a divine Creator, sanctified and consecrated forever by the blessed Lord, who wore this body himself and rose with it from the dead. So the Church touches this poor mortal human frame, sunken in its sin and ignorance, and smitten with all manner of foul disease, and raises it up from the mire in which paganism has placed it, purifying it, cleansing it, healing it of its sickness and infirmities, and restoring it, as far as may be done on earth, to the divine image which it bore in the outset. Medical work must always be an integral part of the Church's foreign missions, just as much as it was when St. Paul and St. Luke went side by side through the cities of Greece, even as it was foreshadowed by Christ himself when by the temple gate in Jerusalem he healed the sick as he preached the gospel.

The second building is the mission school for boys. It has been said that the Christian clergy should confine themselves strictly to religious teaching alone. This cant will do perhaps in a land where Christian education is as free as the air we breathe, but it will not do in a land where ignorance

as dense as the darkness of Egypt is the order of the hour. Some light must be admitted into that darkened mind as to things natural, before it can have even the simplest comprehension of things spiritual. The Church takes the Chinese boy and teaches him of the earth upon which he lives, that it is not flat or square, or the work of *panku*, the Chinese divinity, but it is a globe, swung into space by the almighty hand and law of his loving Father in the heavens. He is taught of the other lands and people upon this globe, is shown conclusively that the Middle Kingdom is erroneously named, and satisfies his mind that the Chinese empire does not comprehend, as his ancestors have always believed, nine tenths of all the earth. He is taught something of the laws that govern the world, of nature, and the whole wonderful creation of harmony and love; and he learns that the stars shining above him are not themselves gods, the objects of his worship, but all light-bearers from Him who is the centre and source of light.

The third building is the school for girls, and the training department for the native women. Here we touch one of the great dividing lines between Christianity and Paganism that comes down through all the centuries. It is the same story over and over again, though modified perhaps to a greater or less degree. Woman is either a brute, a slave, a servant, or a mere household chattel. So when they say, "Can a girl be baptized, can a woman be confirmed by the Bishop, can she have the same privileges identically in the Church of God that the man can"—for under the heathen system her only hope of salvation is to die and perchance to live life over again as a man—we answer, "Yes, blessed be God's name, she can," for as in the Church there is neither "Jew nor Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free," so "neither male nor female, but all are one in Him." An all-important part of the Church's work, then, must be the protection, the education, the training, in a word, the elevation of woman in pagan lands. And let us ever remember that it is only the holy religion of Him who was born of the

blessed Virgin Mary herself, that ever does touch this state of things and change it upon our earth. The Church saves the woman as she saves the man.

The last building that we note is the higher educational institution or training school for the teachers and preachers that are to be the leaders of the Church in the days to come. Not long since a high Chinese official put to one of his secretaries this question, "Why is it that in all western lands no educated men are ever believers in the religion of Jesus Christ?" He asked the question honestly and sincerely, for he knew no better. He had received this information from inquiries directed to those Europeans who, going to the Asiatic coast for gold, and gold alone, had not only not found it convenient to carry their Christianity with them, but had taken pains to circulate the statement that Christianity in the west has been relegated to a few simple-minded women and children. Could there be a more striking illustration of the need of the Church sending out her best material to all foreign fields to train for her future work a native ministry that shall stand up before the heathen rulers and by their lives, as well as by their words, give the answer to such statements as these?

But all must centre at last in the Church. Men must be taught to "perceive and know what things they ought to do," but the Church's work is not complete until she has given them "the grace and power faithfully to fulfill the same." She gives them the light, she must also give them the life. Let us step into the mission church and see it shown forth visibly before us. By the side of the font stands the mission priest from western lands. In his arms lies the Asiatic child, as different from his own as anything that this wide world can show, yet by the power of God conferred upon him he then and there makes that child "a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." It grows and finds in the Church its new home; it receives the spiritual grace of confirmation, and finally it kneels before the altar of God to be strengthened with the bread of

life. There by its side we see kneeling many from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south. There is the solution of the great Asiatic problem, there is visibly shown forth that which the poet has sung, and the philanthropist has dreamed, but which neither has been able to bring out, there is the fatherhood of God, there is the brotherhood of man!

The work, then, of the Church of God in that great empire is something more than merely carrying to its people another moral system higher than their own; something more than merely showing them the superiority of the golden rule of Christ to the silver rule of Confucius; something more than giving them the divine example they are to follow. It is coming to them and saying this, "In and by the power of Christ *risen from the dead*, rise ye to a newness of life." And as they hear this they do rise. Step into the mission schools, and look into the faces of the boys and girls that are gathered there, trained in the Church's higher ways. Even the casual visitor remarks how different their faces seem from those he sees in the streets of the heathen city. What is it that has brought about this change? Mistake it not; it is the power of the new life, able to transform the very features. Enter the home of the native preacher of the Church; the very atmosphere is different from that of the heathen home that adjoins it. And even in the eye of the Christian disciple that meets you in the public highway you see the gleaming of a light that is looked for in vain in the dull, sullen countenance of the heathen that walks by his side.

Lastly, the work of the Church is constructive rather than destructive. She does not go to heathen lands and begin her work by indiscriminately sweeping everything away. Others have done that, but never the Church when she has been true to herself. What message does she bring, for instance, to the simple people in the village? She does not begin by handing to them the Epistle to the Romans or the Gospel of St. John, or reasoning with them about the deeper

mysteries of the Faith. But she begins as St. Paul began in the villages of Lycaonia, by speaking to them of the sunshine, rain, of the changing seasons, the spring-time, and the harvest, the simple proofs easy to be recognized that God has not left himself without witness in their midst. She teaches them to believe, first, in One God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. When she has done that she has led them a long way into the Christian faith. Then, but not until then, she passes on from God the Father to God the Son; to His Birth, Life, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension, and to the Church which he founded here on earth. That is the natural, the normal way, that is the way that must commend itself to anyone who approaches the subject in a true, unprejudiced manner. This is no man-made method, it is the old way of the Church's historic creed.

What message has she to the scholar and official in the great city? She speaks here again, even in the words that the apostle used upon the Areopagus. Over a great gateway in a modern Chinese Athens, in the midst of temples and altars erected to the nation's gods, these words are written, "All true blessings come from heaven above." Strange words are these to be found in a heathen city, but they are there. What saith the Church? "Ye men of this Athens, we perceive that in all things you are intensely religious; for as we passed by we observed this inscription, 'All true blessings come from heaven above.' It is true, very true, as you state, that all true blessings do come from heaven above, but not from the heaven of which you here ignorantly speak. That indefinable something of which you say, 'we know not what it is, but we think it is the throne of the old dead emperors of China,' no blessing can come to you from it, but rather from the heaven of which we speak and teach, which is the throne and seat of God, the Universal Father, from whom all true blessings come, even as one of your own poets hath said, 'Trusting to heaven we eat our daily rice.' We pass down into the streets of the city and on all sides we see two

great Chinese charms, mystic characters of the ancient tongue that have enshrined themselves in the very hearts of the people. They are carved in stone on the doorways of their temples, emblazoned in gold upon the walls of their dwellings, woven into the very texture of their garments, and bound about the foreheads of their children. What are these two great charms, these two mysterious words that mean so much to the Chinese people? *Fuh* and *Sheu*—long life and happiness, in our Anglo-Saxon tongue. We take the words and make them ours at once, and thus in the Church's name we speak:—"With long life and with happiness have we come to satisfy you; not the long life of which you ignorantly speak when you say, 'The grave is our long home,' not that, something far higher and grander than that in the kingdom and eternity of God. And with happiness also can we satisfy you; not the happiness of which you ignorantly speak when you say, 'It is riches, fame, treasure, friends;' something far higher than this, the happiness which is the peace of God, which alone can fully satisfy the longings of your soul."

Such is the Church's work, carried on against opposition of every name and kind, carried on fearlessly and loyally, yet with love and charity to all; growing not by any human order of growth, but by that divine order which says, "First the bud, then the ear, then, in God's good time, the full corn in the ear." Looking at the individual we are not to say that the work of the Church in China is in any sense of the word more *important* than what she is doing in the island empire of Japan, or on the fever-stricken coast of the Dark Continent. But looking at the nation as a whole, realizing the tremendous possibilities for good or for evil that are latent there, acknowledging that they are the Anglo-Saxons of Asia, and that in them is wrapped up the future welfare, not only of that great continent, but of the world, this work must claim a very important place among our foreign missions. To have the privilege of carrying the Light and the Life to this great people, and of building in their midst a true and

pure branch of the One Holy Catholic Kingdom of our Lord and Savior, is one of the richest of the many blessings which Almighty God in his goodness and mercy has vouchsafed to this our American Church.

[NOTE.—The statements made on page 78 with regard to the development of Taoism must not be understood to refer to the remarkable philosophical system of that name which slightly antedates Confucianism, but to the degraded religion of which Pope Chang is, or was lately, the grand wizard. Taoism, as conceived by its founder, Lao-tzŭ, was not only a wonderfully subtle system of philosophy, but also contained the germs of a higher ethical system than Confucianism, as is proved by the great maxim of its founder, "Recompense injury with kindness." It should also be noted that there is more than one account of the introduction of Buddhism into China about 73 A.D.—ED.]